The authors aimed to evaluate breast lymphedema after breast conserving therapy (BCT) and sentinel node biopsy (SNB) or axillary clearance (AC). Fifty-seven breast cancer patients with BCT underwent SNB only and 103 underwent AC (57 with tumor negative and 46 with positive axillary nodes). Clinical examination and breast ultrasonography (US) were performed one year after surgery. Clinical examination revealed breast edema in 48% of patients in the AC node positive group, in 35% in the AC node negative group, and in 23% in the SNB group (p<0.05 between SNB and AC node positive). US revealed subcutaneous edema in the operated breast in 69-70% of the patients in the AC groups and in 28% in the SNB group (p=0.001 – 0.0001 between the SNB and the AC groups.) Breast lymphedema was less common one year after BCT in patients with SNB only than in those with more extensive axillary treatment.